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THE DECEMBER CROP REPORT

A radio discussion between Wallace Kadderly, Radio Service, and E. J. Rowell, Agricultural Marketing Service, broadcast during the Department of Agriculture portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, December 20, 1939.

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KADDERLY:

Yesterday afternoon at exactly 3:00 o'clock the Department of Agriculture issued its final crop report of the year. For the highlights of this report, we're calling on E. J. "Mike" Rowell, of the Agricultural Marketing Service. Mike, let's have a brief summary, then I'll name some of the important commodities, and you tell us about the size of the crop.

ROWELL:

That's fine, Wallace. The end-of-the-season-survey of the nation's crops shows that production was about 1 percent higher than indicated a month ago. The most important revisions during the past month are a 2 percent increase in the estimate of wheat production and a 1 percent increase in corn. You may remember, last year's final report told of remarkably high average of crop yields per acre on fewer acres than average. This year it's much the same kind of a story. Farmers harvested fewer acres than usual, but yields this year averaged higher per acre than in any of the last 25 years except 1937. High yields offset the smaller acreage, with the result that crop production in 1939 was only about 1 percent lower than in 1938 and about 4 percent above the average during the pre-drought period. The farmers harvested about 325 million acres this year, and that's some 17 million less than last year. There are several ways of accounting for this smaller acreage, among them being the large quantity of grain, cotton, hay, canned vegetables and other supplies on hand last spring, and the comparatively low prices of some crops at planting time.

KADDERLY:

And I suppose too, more general compliance with the adjustment program.

ROWELL:

Yes, that's another reason.

KADDERLY:

Now let's have the production figures for 1939 on some of the crops, starting with corn.

ROWELL:

Over 2 billion 600 million bushels -- about 55 million over last year. - In Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa production averaged 50 bushels per acre or better, and the United States average was the highest since 1920.

KADDERLY:

Wheat.

ROWELL:

755 million bushels. That's about 175 million less than last year.

KADDERLY:

Hay.

(Over)

ROWELL:

Hay of all kinds totaled about 85 million tons. That's much below last year but bigger than any of the preceding 10 years.

KADDERLY:

Soybeans.

ROWELL:

87-1/2 million bushels, compared with 63 million last year.

KADDERLY:

Cotton.

ROWELL:

Nearly 12 million bales and from the smallest acreage picked in more than 40 years.

KADDERLY:

Flaxseed.

ROWELL:

20 million bushels, -- the largest crop since 1930.

KADDERLY:

Next, tobacco.

ROWELL:

A new high record, -- 1 billion 770 million pounds, -- nearly 400 million over last year, -- and grown on the largest acreage since 1931.

KADDERLY:

Oats.

ROWELL:

937 million bushels. That's about 130 million less than last year.

KADDERLY:

Potatoes.

ROWELL:

361 million bushels, -- that's a little smaller than last year's crop, -- about 3 percent below average.

KADDERLY:

Apples.

ROWELL:

A commercial production slightly over 100 million bushels, -- that's more than the average, and much more than last year.

KADDERLY:

I know that doesn't begin to cover the long list of commodities which are covered by this crop report.

ROWELL:

That's right, Wallace, we could cover many kinds of seed, peas and beans, and grapes and cherries, and so forth. There are two other statements I'd like to add. First, the total production of 13 major fruit crops for marketing during the 1939-40 season is only about 1 percent less than the record production of 2 years ago. Almonds, walnuts, filberts, and improved pecans are all fairly large crops, being well above average.

KADDERLY:

Ad lib close.

(Highlights from the final crop report of the year.)

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